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THE SALMAGUNDI EXHIBITION.

IN attempting to fill the Academy walls the artists of the Salmagundi Sketch Club have, to use a homely expression, "spread their butter over too large a piece of bread." While there is enough creditable work for a fair ordinary display, the present exhibition is made conspicuously weak by diluting what is good and strong by the infusion of a lot of contributions such as, if judged by their merits, assuredly would not procure the authors admission to the club. The tendency of the Salmagundi seems to be to forget the proper functions of black and white, and produce oil paintings in monochrome instead of sketches in crayon, charcoal, or pen-and-ink. Because some magazine draughtsmen, who make oil pictures in black and white so that they may be photographed well on the block, have sent these to past Salmagundi exhibitions to be hung, there seems to be a general abandonment of legitimate media for monochrome work, and every young fellow who can handle a brush inflicts upon the public a glistening, sticky thing in a frame, which has absolutely no "raison d'être" as an exhibition piece. Mistakes in drawing may be freely pardoned in an unpretentious crayon or a charcoal sketch, but what consideration does Mr. George Inness, Jr., for example, deserve when he invites censure by sending such a wretched affair as his stallion and groom, in a frame with the proportions of an extra-large sized Academy picture, and mistakes in proportion at least to the size of the frame?

Mr. G. W. Edwards and Mr. Leon Moran, young artists whose work it has been our pleasure to commend before they were as favorably known as they are now, fully justify in their exhibits here the opinions we have expressed as to their talent and their modesty. Mr. Edwards' marine and figure studies are full of merit, and young Moran, in his single figure of a girl "Calling Home the Cows," contrives to tell a very simple story in a very graceful manner. Percy Moran is creditably represented, and Edward Moran, the father, ably sustains his reputation with a very strong marine. Each of the artists named in this group draws well in charcoal and in pen-and-ink, and could well afford to set the example of returning to their use.

Sarony, who sends several graceful studies from the nude, shows what effective work can be done with charcoal and stomp. George W. Maynard uses crayon. So does Arthur Quartley. As in his capital little marine called "Abandoned," he sometimes employs Chinese white after using the stomp. F. Hopkinson Smith works in crayon on gray paper. Champney gives in pure crayon a capital study of the head of a girl. Kruseman Van Elton, in his large landscapes in crayon, by too much finish gives his work the conventional veneer of a lithograph. E. A. Abbey has some strong, clean-looking pen-and-ink drawings in agreeable contrast to many of the painty things about them. Church has a taking sketch of a pretty gleaner with a dove nibbling at some ears of wheat in the sheaf she holds. Charles Volkmar, A. F. Bunner, Nehlig, M. F. Burns, H. P. Share, F. M. Gregory, Frank Fowler, J. S. Hartley, and E. M. Richards are all represented by characteristic work, some of which is suggested in the autographic sketches on another page of the magazine. "His Lordship" is an attractive little picture of an infantine scion of nobility at dinner, with a pompous flunky waiting on him; but one feels at once that the idea is overdone, on noticing the bottle of champagne in the cooler and the decanter of sherry on the table. Mrs. M. B. Odenheimer Fowler has a charming female head painted in red oils. The same thing done in red crayon might have been worthy of much praise.

The display of etchings must be pronounced a failure. The portfolio by members of the club contains nothing worth exhibiting except the contributions by Volkmar, Edwards, Richards, Champney, and Vance. Apart from these there are so few American etchings, good or bad, that wall space has been given over to foreign published works which are not even new. Seymour Haden's "Marshes off Erith," executed in 1865, is here, as well as several plates from the French journal "L'Art." They are in the catalogue, and some have been sold at five dollars each. Who is responsible for their presence? A member of the club told the writer that he supposed those from "L'Art" must be proofs sent direct from Paris. But this is improbable: they are so framed that they show no margins to distinguish them from ordinary impressions.

There is much talent in the Salmagundi Club, which,

properly directed, will bring out of this society a crop of matured artists who will exercise a decided influence on the art of the country. But the club must not repeat the mistake of this exhibition if it would sustain the reputation so ungrudgingly given to it when it was content to show its work in a single gallery, without the aids of portfolios of etchings (which it is not yet competent to produce), illustrated catalogues, and the attractive glamour of an Academy exhibition of paintings. The Salmagundi is professedly a *sketch* club. It is on that it has made its reputation. Let it continue to be such, confine its attempts within the limits of its abilities, and it will continue to deserve well of the public.

A CRICHTON OF THE BRUSH.

"THE world knows nothing of its greatest men," it has been said. Some persons who read this article, perhaps, are unaware that "Col. James Fairman, M.A., the American artist and art lecturer," has returned to New York after having "pursued his studies in all the great art centres of Europe" for eleven years. Some, indeed, may be so ignorant that they never heard of Col. James Fairman, M.A. We ourselves confess to such ignorance until this distinguished man honored us with a call and supplemented his personal narrative by handing us his printed biography, which establishes beyond dispute that Col. James Fairman, M.A., is no ordinary person. He "began drawing when five years of age, painted five years in water colors before he touched oil"; and, having "studied what little New York could teach in portrait painting," went to London. "Returning to America in a full-rigged ship, he secured permission to do work as a 'light hand,' which involved reefing, steering, and other duties, and thus, in a seven weeks' stormy voyage, he studied technical matters in marine painting." He does not seem, however, to have taken at once to marine or even house painting. We find him, instead, "brought prominently forward as a platform speaker." Then "he took a thorough course in law, under the Hon. E. Delafield Smith." He "next pursued a course in Latin, and later acquired a good knowledge of New Testament Greek," which, no doubt, he has found very useful in his career as an artist. In quick succession he became a member of the New York City Board of Education, a candidate for Congress, and "an enthusiastic student of the art of war." "Into the service of his country he threw himself with all his ardent energy," and rose to be a colonel of volunteers. He left the army in 1863, and took a studio in New York, but "soon discovered how little could be taught by the leading landscape painters in the city." "One of his first landscapes, called 'Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way,' we are told, 'was presented to Gen. John C. Fremont, and the artist now thinks it 'a matter of indulgent generosity that the great Pathfinder accepted it as a gift.' After a visit to the Colonel's studio we incline to the same opinion."

We cull a few gems from Colonel Fairman's biography. They ought, by right, to be incorporated in the next edition of the Dictionary of Artists of the Nineteenth Century; but as that publication has shamefully omitted even to mention his name, this is perhaps too much to expect. We begin with an item of art news:

"In 1867 he published a series of articles in The Chicago Art Journal, criticising the art organizations of America. The work was handled in the fearless and forcible manner which has characterized his public services; and his exposure of the utter unfitness of the so-called 'National Academy of Design' in New York, for any service in the true interests of art, was the pioneer effort to the logical results which have followed in better art schools which have superseded it."

Another paragraph tells us that in the winter of 1867 Colonel Fairman delivered three lectures in New York on art, which, it is to be hoped, by the way, were duly attended by the artists whose ignorance he so scathingly exposes. We are told that—

"These were profound discourses... and, as we understand, will soon be put forth by the author in a small volume. Mr. Fairman is recognized by the many who have heard him in New England and elsewhere as the most brilliant and instructive art lecturer in America."

We next find this truly great man compared with Turner, to the great disadvantage of the Englishman:

"Scientific knowledge has opened to Fairman the artistic method of rendering the sunbeam, which Turner never fully discovered. The golden radiance over the hills of Jerusalem, the

glow of the oriental sky, the evanescent beauty of the foaming billows of the ocean, the light streaming through the leaves and branches of the birch-tree, or falling on the backs of cattle from the open gateway of the sun—who has given the world better pictures of all these?"

An anonymous American critic is credited with this:

"In power of depicting the glories of the sun-light, and producing the illusions of nature, especially in her phenomenal aspect, he [Colonel James Fairman, M.A., not Turner be it understood] has, in truth no equal. This is the confession of European art students of the highest rank, as well as of intelligent judges generally, who find his works a refreshing contrast with the crudeness and inanity of much that we are called upon to admire in American landscape painting."

The biographer has not done with him yet. Colonel James Fairman, M.A., he insists, "adds to the qualities of an orator and a thinker in the arenas of social science, politics, and theology, the qualities of a poet." He then gives some of this Crichton's verses, which we hope our readers will accept, on our judgment, as very fine, without requiring us to reprint them.

If the biographer had not already exhausted the language of favorable criticism, we might try to say something pleasant about the pictures in the Colonel's studio which represent—so the notice on our invitation card modestly puts it—"the highest school of modern art." But the Colonel having reached perfection, what remains to be said? An art critic who accompanied us on this visit to the shrine of genius flippantly stigmatized the pictures as "clever rubbish." But that only shows that he is no judge of rubbish.

AN AGENCY FOR ART COMMISSIONS.

READERS of THE ART AMATEUR so often request us to have crayon and oil portraits, paintings on china silk, etc., done for them that we have decided to establish an agency in connection with this publication, especially for the execution of such commissions and of others, perhaps, of a similar kind. We have arranged with competent artists to do the work at moderate prices. No work will be allowed to go out unless approved as being up to the proper artistic standard of excellence. Persons at a distance from art centres we believe especially will find this a convenience.

My Note Book.



NOT a little fuss is being made about the monotype process, as it is called, for producing pictures which have something of the combined effects of a wash drawing and an etching. The modus operandi is very simple. With printer's ink of any color the artist makes his drawing on a clean copper plate, manipulating with a brush, a stick, or the finger, to produce the required effects. One impression is then taken from the plate on an engraver's press in etching style, and if the artist's work is good you obtain by printing it on India paper an attractive picture, which to the uninitiated looks valuable. The trick—for it is nothing else—has long been known to practical engravers. But recently Mr. Charles A. Walker, of Boston, has availed himself of the process to produce an imposing array of landscape monotypes which have brought large prices at Knoedler's, where they have been on exhibition. In Boston he sold some at amazingly high figures. The buyers were impressed with the "artistic" appearance of the pictures, without the remotest idea as to how they were made. Mr. Bicknell, of Boston, is a kind of rival of Mr. Walker in this enterprise. Both send specimens to the Salmagundi exhibition. Of course, the pictures are valuable only according to the artistic ability of the makers of them.

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THE sumptuously printed and illustrated edition of Thackeray's "Chronicle of the Drum," just brought out by Charles Scribner's Sons, must divide with Osgood's "Lucile" the honor of representing the American school of wood engraving among the new gift-books of the season. It brings back memories of a series of American illustrated art works, all excellent in their day. There was "The Festival of Song," brought out some twenty years ago by Bunce & Huntington. Not much later came "Bitter Sweet" from